



Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program

Mayor Anthony Williams and District Council are starting the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program. It will help older people with low incomes who are raising their grandchildren, great grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. District residents who qualify may get money every month to help care for children living with them. Please read the following fact sheet thoroughly along with the attached "Frequently Asked Questions."

Who will run the program?

The DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) will take applications and run the program. CFSA has a complete application package that includes the materials you need for the background checks but other organizations have the application form. There are several community organizations available to assist you in completing the application process. Those organizations are listed in the "Frequently Asked Questions".

Is this program for me?

You must meet **ALL** these conditions.

- ☐ Your grandchild, great grandchild, great niece, and/or great nephew under age 18 lives with you.
- ☐ A court has given you legal custody or standby guardianship of the child.
- ☐ The child has lived with you for the past six months or more.
- ☐ The child's parent has not lived with you in the past six months. (This doesn't count if the parent gave you standby guardianship of the child.)
- ☐ You live in the District.
- ☐ The total of all money coming into your household is below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level (see box).
- ☐ You have applied for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child.
- ☐ All adults living in your home must submit the results for national and local criminal background checks and a Child Protection Registry check (to rule out child abuse).

<i>Total number of people in your home is:</i>	<i>Total yearly household income is less than:</i>
2	\$26,400
3	\$33,200
4	\$40,000
5	\$46,800
6	\$53,600
7 or more	\$60,400

Does this program have limits?

Yes. **Getting into the program is first-come/first-served.** You can use money from this program only to care for the children you list in the application.

How do I apply?

Call 202-442-6009 to ask for an application by mail. You can also visit our office at the address below to pick up an application. If you plan on coming to the office it is strongly recommended that you make an appointment first.

Should I do anything now to get ready?

Yes. Take these steps before you apply.

1. Make sure you have legal custody of the child. Gather the court order that proves you have custody. If you don't have legal custody and . . .
 - You are age 60 or over, call Legal Counsel for the Elderly, 202-434-2120.
 - You are under age 60, call the Children's Law Center, 202-467-4900, extension 4.
2. Apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child. Call the DC Department of Human Services, 202-724-5506.
3. Get a criminal background check of everyone age 18 or older living in your home. Get fingerprinted at the Metropolitan Police Department, Criminal Record Checks, 300 Indiana Avenue NW, third floor, during regular business hours. Each person must show a driver's license or other government-issued identification. If you obtain the application package from CFSA, we will cover the cost of the \$35 background check for up to two adults living in the household. Applicants are responsible for the \$7 fee required to get the DC criminal records check. ***All persons 18 years or older, who are living in the household are required to get both the national and local criminal background checks.***

How much money can I get?

The amount you receive depends on several factors including the age of the children and the amount you currently receive from TANF. The amount is based on a daily rate so your check each month will fluctuate. On average your monthly per child amount could be anywhere between \$586 and \$895.

Where can I get more information?

Call 202-442-6009 during regular business hours or visit <http://cfsa.dc.gov> . If you would like to speak with someone in person, please call ahead to schedule an appointment. **IF YOU ARRIVE WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT YOUR WAIT TIME COULD BE SIGNIFICANT.**



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is legal custody?

Legal Custody is a form of guardianship that can ONLY be awarded through the court system. Without a legal custody order, signed by a judge, we will not approve your application. The only exception to this is in situations where standby guardianship has been awarded. Standby guardianship is also awarded through the court system. A power of attorney or a letter from the child's parent or the child's school do NOT award legal custody. Also, please note that we need the custody order signed by the judge, a "Complaint for Custody" document is not sufficient.

2. How do I get legal custody?

In order to receive legal custody it must be awarded to you in a court proceeding. You can file a "Complaint for Custody" to initiate this process. There are organizations that can help you obtain custody listed at the end of this document. Please be aware that obtaining custody can be a lengthy process depending on your circumstances.

3. Why do I need legal custody?

The legislation that created this program requires all subsidy recipients to have legal custody. This ensures that you have legal responsibility for the child and and prevents fraud. Many of our applicants have been caring for their grandchildren since birth and have not obtained legal custody. However, legal custody is still important due to the stability it provides while maintaining some of the rights of the parents. Obtaining legal custody does NOT terminate the rights of the biological parent.

4. I've adopted my grandchildren. Am I still eligible?

No. When you adopt a child, that child legally becomes your child as if it were born to you. So legally, that child is no longer your grandchild and you would no longer be eligible.

5. I'm the child's aunt, not the grandparent. Am I still qualified?

No. You must be the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle. No other relationships are eligible. Informal relationships such as "godmother" are not eligible. You will be required to prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, or the legal custody order itself.

6. How do I prove that I am the child's grandparent?

You prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, or the legal custody order itself. Many times your legal custody order will list your relationship to the child, but sometimes it may only refer to you as the "plaintiff." If this is the case then we can establish your relationship through legal documents such as birth certificates, paternity acknowledgements, or court reports. For example, if you are the child's paternal grandparent (a parent of the child's father) you can provide a letter from the child's father acknowledging he is the father and his birth certificate showing you are his parent.

7. What is the Child Protection Register Check and why do I need it?

The child protection register is our database of those persons responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. The law requires that all adults in the house fill one out so we can ensure the safety of the children in households receiving the subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified if you are listed in the registry. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis. Please fill out the register check completely, have it notarized or witnessed and provide us with the **original**. Failure to include this form or provide the original will delay your application, as we must have an original signature to process the check.

8. Why do I need a criminal background check?

ALL adults (anyone 18 or over) in the house must submit the results of a local criminal history check and be fingerprinted for a federal background check. This is a requirement of the program and helps to ensure a suitable environment for the children in the household being considered for a subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified because you or someone in your home has a criminal record. The CFSA reviews every case individually and takes into account the entire situation. This includes how long ago the conviction occurred, the type of conviction, and the circumstances surrounding it. It can take anywhere between 4-8 weeks before we receive the results of the fingerprint check. We have no control over this process and cannot expedite it. Your application is not considered complete until we receive the results

9. I've been told I cannot get TANF for the children because I get SSI. Am I still eligible?

Yes. It is important to note that you only must APPLY for TANF. If TANF denies you because you currently receive SSI, you may still be eligible. Combine your entire household income and see the income chart on the fact sheet to see if you are eligible.

10. Do you have a notary at your office I can use?

No. Please note that you must have your application notarized.

11. Can you make copies of my original documents?

No. It is your responsibility to make copies before you arrive. We also are not responsible for returning any original documents you mail to us.

12. I'd like to go over my application with someone before I submit it. Can someone review it for me?

Yes. We would be happy to sit down with you and go over your application to make sure it is complete. In order to facilitate this, please call (202)442-6009 to schedule an appointment. If you drop in without an appointment and wish speak to someone your wait time could be significant.

13. Will I continue to get TANF if I am awarded this subsidy?

Yes. The amount you receive from this program is based on how much TANF you already receive from the District government.

14. How long does the application process take?

We have forty-five (45) days to process your application from day we receive all of the required documents. Please note the 45 days does not begin to run until we receive all documents, including the results of the FBI check and the legal custody order. Average processing times are significantly less though if you initially submit a complete application. Submitting an incomplete application will delay your application significantly.

15. What happens after I am approved?

After you are approved an appointment will be scheduled for you to visit our office so you can sign a subsidy agreement. Once you sign the subsidy agreement your case will become active and you will get a check in the mail the following month. The subsidy is NOT retroactive to the date you first submitted your application.

16. Can I have the subsidy directly deposited into my bank account?

No. We can only send you a check in the mail each month. On average, the check will arrive between the 10th and the 13th of each month.

17. Will you inform the child's parents I am receiving this subsidy?

No. Your application and involvement in this program is confidential. Your personal information may only be released at your request.

18. What kind of things can I pay for with this subsidy?

You can use the money you receive from this program ONLY on things that benefit the child listed in the subsidy agreement. This includes but is not limited to: groceries, school clothes, summer camp, a portion of your rent or utilities, etc.

Other Organizations Available to Assist You:

For those 60 and older

Legal Counsel for the Elderly – (202)434-2100

Emmaus Senior Services – (202)745-1200

For those under 60

Children's Law Center – (202)467-4900 ext. 4

For those living in Anacostia or Shaw

Bread for the City (NW) – (202)265-2400

Bread for the City (SE) – (202)561-8587

For those families dealing the effects of HIV/AIDS

Family Ties Project – (202)547-3349